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181002Z Jan 05

ACTION EAP-00

INFO	LOG-00	NP-00	AF-00	AID-00	CIAE-00	INL-00	C-00
DODE-00	DOEE-00	PERC-00	DS-00	EUR-00	FBIE-00	VC-00	
H-00	TEDE-00	INR-00	IO-00	LAB-01	L-00	CAC-00	
VCE-00	M-00	AC-00	NSAE-00	NSCE-00	OCS-00	OES-00	
OIC-00	OIG-00	OMB-00	PA-00	PM-00	PRS-00	ACE-00	
P-00	SCT-00	FMPC-00	SP-00	IRM-00	SSO-00	SS-00	
TRSE-00	T-00	BBG-00	R-00	IIP-00	PMB-00	DSCC-00	
PRM-00	DRL-00	G-00	NFAT-00	SAS-00	/001W		

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FM AMEMBASSY HANOI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6247

INFO ASSOCIATION OF SOUTHEAST ASIAN NATIONS

AMEMBASSY BEIJING

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY SEOUL

AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM

AMEMBASSY TOKYO

AMCONSUL SHENYANG

USMISSION GENEVA

C O N F I D E N T I A L HANOI 000136

SIPDIS

STATE FOR EAP/BCLTV

E.O. 12958: DECL: 01/18/2015

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREF](#) [SU](#) [VM](#) [FR](#) [KN](#) [HUMANR](#) [DPRK](#)

SUBJECT: (C) DETAILS ON NORTH KOREAN ASYLUM-SEEKERS' DEPARTURE FROM HANOI

REF: A. HANOI 3365

[¶](#)B. HANOI 3389

Classified By: Ambassador Michael W. Marine. Reason: 1.4 (b), (d)

[¶](#)1. (C) Summary: Six North Korean asylum-seekers, four in the French Embassy and two in the Swedish Embassy, departed Vietnam January 7 for Singapore and, soon after, the ROK. Throughout the affair, the GVN's generally helpful and forthcoming attitude was in contrast to that of the ROK Embassy, according to the Swedish Embassy. In arranging the departure of the North Koreans, both the GVN and the ROK Embassy insisted, out of deference to the DPRK, that the six depart Vietnam on French and Swedish travel documents. In the end, the GVN reportedly insisted to the Swedes that the Swedish Embassy would have to turn over to Vietnamese authorities any future asylum-seekers, who would then be sent back to China. End Summary.

[¶](#)2. (C) Swedish Embassy DCM Helena Sangeland briefed us January 18 on the details surrounding the January 7 departure from Hanoi of the two North Korean asylum-seekers in the Swedish Embassy and the four in the French Embassy (reftels). From the beginning, the GVN officials with whom the Swedish Embassy dealt were generally "very helpful" and "forthcoming," Sangeland said. The GVN seemed eager to both keep the affair under wraps and quickly find a solution. Contacts with officials from the ROK Embassy were less productive, however. According to Sangeland, South Korean Embassy officials initially seemed reluctant to involve themselves, eventually requiring the intervention of the ROK Ambassador to "get things moving." Sangeland guessed that the ROK Embassy's hesitancy was designed to send the message that "getting to Seoul via Hanoi is neither smooth nor easy."

[¶](#)3. (C) Once engaged, the ROK Embassy declared that establishing that the six North Koreans' "true intent" was to "travel to Seoul" was the sine qua non. To that end, a South Korean EmbOff interviewed the Swedish Embassy's two asylum-seekers in Sangeland's presence. Their exchange seemed "comfortable," the DCM said. Following the interview, the ROK EmbOff told the Swedes that the North Koreans had said that, after arriving in Hanoi, they made their way to a Korean restaurant, at which they were pointed in the direction of the Swedish Embassy and "other embassies." (Note: The North Koreans had initially asserted that they had no help at all in finding their way to the Swedish Embassy. End note.)

[¶](#)4. (C) Initially, all sides concerned, including the GVN and ROK Embassy, had settled on Bangkok as the best transfer point. However, the tsunami disaster and the increased demands that it put on both the Thai Government and the Swedish Embassy in Bangkok led to the decision to switch to Singapore.

[¶](#)5. (C) According to the Swedish DCM, both the ROKG and the

GVN had insisted, out of deference to the DPRK, that the French and Swedish Governments issue to the asylum-seekers "laissez-passer" documents, in which the GVN subsequently affixed visas and stamped entry franks. The six North Koreans departed Hanoi's Noi Bai International Airport January 7 via a Singapore Air flight to Singapore and were accompanied by DCM Sangeland and a vice consul from the French Embassy. The group was met in Singapore by Singaporean and ROK officials, who took charge of the six, presented them with documents for travel to South Korea and escorted them to an ROK-bound flight. The handover in Singapore seemed "very routinized," Sangeland observed.

16. (C) As helpful as the GVN had been, however, the Swedes' main interlocutor, a Deputy Director General in the MFA's Consular Department, had in the end underlined that this would be the "first and last time." In the future, the Swedish Embassy would have to hand over to the GVN any DPRK asylum-seekers who ca